

SHORT STORIES SERIES

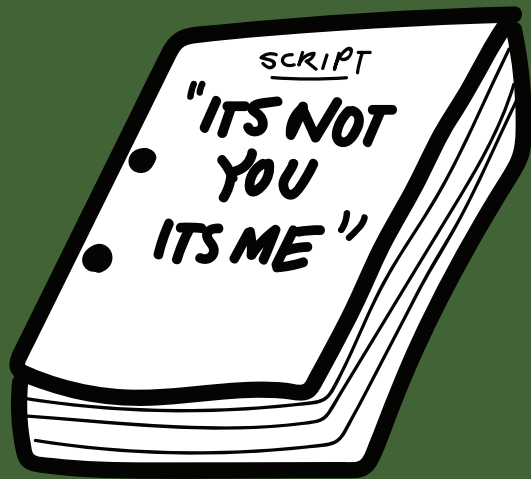
ISSUE: SEVEN - A

THEME: SOMETHING NEW

FIVE STORIES: BRIEF BAR

WRITTEN BY: SCOTTY ESCOBAR

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Five Stories: Briefly Bad

Written by Scotty Escobar

I'm rather frustrating, at least that's what I've been told. The type to start a sentence and change their mind halfway through. Sometimes, I give up on speaking altogether. My eyes shifting from one side of the room to another till someone asks:

what's going on inside that head of yours?

I used to think that this made me a good listener somehow. Finding some sort of comfort in letting others speak. People have so much to say it seems; me, not so much.

You stopped talking to me for two years,

my older sister says to a 22-year-old version
of me over a phone call.

My pockets have gone empty and my luggage from Mexico City now sits inside my parents' house—a home, a family, a union made up of people who might not have much in common but still cohabitate. (I think of zoo animals in confinement. They cohabitate, whether they were captured or born into captivity. — Are we the same? Do we feel the same? What should we feel?).

Of course, my sister wouldn't be very thrilled to hear me thinking this way. *Just leave if you're so unhappy*, I'd imagine her saying to me again.

When I turned 23, my dad admitted that he didn't actually like me. *You're so repetitive*, he says as we drive back home one afternoon, *you're always going over the same problems, it's exhausting*.

I don't know how to respond; what's there to say when you can't get your own dad to like you?

We haven't spoken much since then.

When my last boyfriend left me, he followed an "it's not you, it's me" script. The script didn't seem very convincing though. Turns out, it had a lot to do with me. *Tiring*, that's what he called me eventually. *You didn't communicate when you should have, you disappeared*, he explains. *And besides, I don't like it when you're sad. It makes me sad*.

Maybe it's easier to be alone, but as he leaves, the pain says otherwise, so maybe it's not so easy.

You gotta change,

a therapist says to me. Multiple, actually.

So I try. I work on the things I do, the things I know, the things I feel. Turn into some version of me made up of things that don't come naturally. Now, I don't feel like me. I feel like no one. And it's been so long, I don't know how to go back.

—*scotty escobar*

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The Short Stories Series is a collaboration with writers to start a zine collection that reflects their writing and give them a platform to distribute their work.

This project is open to the public for submissions, for more information please see www.denaayuni.com/ss

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Thank you for reading!

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